Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of July 17, 2014 Meeting

Members Present: Harry Pease, Carl Schmidt, Carl Cassel, Kathy Baker; Alternates Present: Emily Bryant, Craig Putnam, Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Alternates Emily Bryant, Fran Plaisted and Craig Putnam were asked to serve for absent commission members.

Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 19 meeting, Carl Cassel seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Old Business:

Solarize Orford Status and Next Steps: Emily and Carl provided an update. They met with the Selectboard on July 16 to update them and ask them to sign an endorsement letter. Following some discussion, the letter was modified and shortened to only include a general endorsement of the Solarize Orford project. There are sufficient volunteers and Carl and Emily are working with them to establish the required committee.

Orford Conservation Land Project Update: The project submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for funding by Tullando Farm made it through the first round of reviews and is now in the second round review. The project includes removal of all invasive plants, establishing a 35 foot riparian buffer along the river to stabilize the bank, and improvement of the farm road on the bank between the upper and lower meadows to allow use by farm equipment. The goal is to complete work by end of 2017. NRCS also asked for permission to take samples of invasive plants from the land to use in a display at the North Haverhill Fair.

Long Term Capital Investment Advisory Committee Update: Carl Cassel, the Conservation Commission’s representative on the Committee, discussed the prior meeting which focused mostly on bridges and culverts. The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, who is leading the study, will host a public information session on August 11.

Conservation Fund and Budget: Harry provided a budget summary. To date our expenses are $676.28. He reviewed the Conservation Fund with Mascoma Savings Bank of $167,355.37 total in checking and savings. He also reviewed the most recent Tax Collector’s report which shows taxes for land taken out of current use, which is the source of funding for the Conservation Fund. We are now getting monthly budget reports from the Town Administrator, monthly bank statements from the Town Treasurer, and monthly reports from the Tax Collector which allows us to better track and manage our funds and expenses.

Water Testing Program: Anne reported that the Health Officer recommended that the Town post notices where water test results show E-coli levels higher than the State’s safe swimming limits. The Commissioners agreed and also recommended that the results be shared on the list serv.

Fisher Shoreland and Wetland Permit Applications Update: Carl Schmidt reported that no determination had yet been made by the NH Department of Environmental Services.

Purple Loosestrife Control Project Monitoring: Harry reported that the beetles were released a month ago and we need to periodically monitor them so we can assess if they are effective. He suggested a monthly check, including taking photos, with periodic reports on list serv, which was approved.

**Ray Clark Subdivision Update: Carl Schmidt reported that Ray Clark has applied to subdivide his property on Route 10 near Bridge Street. The Planning Board approved subdivision with several stipulations. We discussed the possibility of purchasing a conservation easement on the small sub-divided lot next to river, but determined that the price is too high and we would not pursue it. We will continue to monitor the sub-division.**

**Upper Valley River Subcommittee Candidates: Harry talked to Christine Balch and she is interested in being a candidate. The Commissioners agreed that Harry should recommend to the Selectboard that they appoint Christine to fill one of the two Orford positions on the Subcommittee. The Selectboard is still looking for another candidate and Harry is looking for suggestions.**

**New Business:**

**License Agreement to Farm Orford Conservation Land: Harry was notified by NRCS that the current License Agreement with Tullando Farm that expires in May 2016 doesn’t provide enough time to complete the practices contained in the project application. Harry recommended that an amendment be made to the current License Agreement to extend the expiration date to December 31, 2018. Kathy made a motion to extend the date to December 31, 2018, Carl Cassel seconded the motion, and the motion carried. An amendment was signed and Harry agreed to send a copy to NRCS and to Tullando Farm.**

**Commission Membership and Meeting Attendance: Harry reminded Commissioners that they should try to attend all meetings, and notify him if they are unable to attend. He also reminded everyone that we still have one vacant position and we spent time brain storming potential candidates.**

**Soper Property on the Connecticut River: Carl Schmidt suggested we look at this property. Harry reported that the Upper Valley Land Trust has been talking to the owners. Carl agreed to talk to UVLT about the property.**

Kiosk at the Orford Conservation Land: Craig suggested that we find a contractor to build the kiosk since Rob O’Donnell has not found time to do it yet. Jeff agreed to discuss this with Rob before we take any action.

Education: Anne suggested we do more education events, such as a plant walk or canoe/kayak trip. Carl Cassel agreed to contact Sarah Schwaegler about leading a plant walk at the Orford Conservation Land.

Connecticut River Joint Commission: Carl Schmidt said that the Upper Valley River Subcommittee is gathering information regarding river bank erosion in connection with the current relicensing review for the Wilder Dam. They are looking for old photos of the riverbank to compare with the current river bank.

August Conservation Commission Meeting: Kathy Baker made a motion to not have an August meeting, Craig seconded the motion and the motion carried. The next Conservation Commission Meeting will be on September 18. It was also agreed that if something came up that required a meeting we would have one.

Carl Cassel made a motion to adjourn, Kathy seconded the motion, the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Plaisted

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